DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 104 216 HE 006 337

AUTHOR Kronovet, Esther
TITLE The Management of Affirmative Action Programs: A Follow-up Report.
PUB DATE 75
NOTE 10p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Role; Colleges; Community Colleges; Equal Education; *Equal Opportunities (Jobs); *Higher Education; *Management; *Managerial Occupations; Research Projects; Universities; Vocational Schools
IDENTIFIERS *Affirmative Action

ABSTRACT

After initiating a survey in 1973 to study the "manager" of affirmative action programs, a followup was conducted among the same 58 public institutions throughout New York State to determine (1) whether there has been any change in the perception of the role of affirmative action officer, (2) the turnover rate among those assigned affirmative action responsibility, (3) the extent to which affirmative action committees have been organized, and (4) whether the productivity of the "manager" of affirmative action has resulted in an affirmative action plan on file with the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The findings indicate that there has been an increase in the number of individuals with full-time affirmative action responsibility at both the four-year colleges and agricultural and technical schools. However, there was no increase among the community colleges. Individuals assigned affirmative action duties on a collateral basis continue to have job titles that cover a range of positions. There was a substantial turnover rate among affirmative action officers from 1973 to 1974. More than 50 percent of the institutions surveyed report that their affirmative action plans are "in preparation." (Author)

ED104216

THE MANAGEMENT OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMS: A FOLLOW-UP REPORT*

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH EDUCATION & WELFARE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Esther Kronovet

Nassau Community College

In recent months criticisms from a variety of sources have been directed toward the Federal government's civil rights enforcement agencies. The charges of insufficient action serve to highlight the backlog of complaints, prolonged compliance negotiations, inadequate penalties, and the lack of periodic and thorough compliance reviews, particularly among colleges and universities.

Although warranted, this form of adverse publicity serves to deflect attention away from one of the sources of the problem, namely, the institution itself. Not only have colleges and universities failed to establish models for society with respect to equal opportunity, but their efforts have been designed to barely meet the minimum requirements established by the Federal government.

Unfortunately, conflict over internal governance has not helped advance affirmative action goals on campuses. Even after the initial and startling impact of Executive mandate has settled down into some semblance of order on some campuses, others are either resisting or struggling to understand how the regulations of the Federal government can be translated into viable programs that fit into the institutions' goals and system of internal governance. Increasing union activity is adding another dimension

---

*This paper is based upon a presentation "Affirmative Action: Illusion or Reality" at the Conference on Women - Their Future in the University and the Community held at Skidmore College, October 17-19, 1974. The program was co-sponsored by Skidmore College, the Office of Higher Education Management Services, State Education Department, and the New York State Citizens Council.

HE 006 337

to the college scene which serves to jeopardize the full impact of affirmative action. Today, even a committed, well intentioned college president could find himself or herself challenged by union representatives on the right to make unilateral decisions pertaining to affirmative action goals which include hiring procedures.

The complexity of issues related to governance is further compounded by decision-making roles assigned to other governing bodies such as academic senates and councils. These organizations are increasingly at odds with union activities on matters of jurisdiction over the kind of decision-making that has implications for the academic side of the institution, including policies and procedures that affect faculty hiring and promotion. The fact that Federal law supersedes local authority is not sufficiently acknowledged by those groups that are vying for power. Indeed, the decision-making network today on many campuses, particularly those in the public sector, is so widespread that it is becoming increasingly difficult for Executive Officers to mandate practices that conform to the requirements of Executive Orders 11246 and 11375.

Thus, at a time when college and university governance has become increasingly complex and a source of ongoing conflict, many institutions are ill prepared to implement the requirements of the Federal government with respect to filing a written affirmative action plan with the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Now, a couple of years after Executive Orders 11246 and 11375 have been in effect, some institutions have still failed to meet this requirement. Unfortunately, HEW has not done its utmost to pave the way for compliance by dealing directly with unresolved

issues and by restructuring its Higher Education Guidelines[1] along more specific lines.

Since a key figure in coping with these issues is the Affirmative Action Officer, a study was initiated in 1973 with a follow-up in 1974 to acquire more information about the "managers" of affirmative action programs. The 1973 findings,[2] based upon a 100% return of a questionnaire completed by 58 public institutions throughout New York State, indicated that most institutions view affirmative action responsibilities as collateral duties; further, that some had not appointed individuals to function as Affirmative Action Officers. The fulltime job titles of those individuals functioning in this role ranged from College President to Personnel Director.

One year later, in the fall of 1974, a follow-up study was conducted among the same 58 institutions which included 14 four year colleges, 38 commun. colleges and six agricultural and technical schools. The purposes were to determine (1) whether there has been any change in the perception of the position of Affirmative Action Officer, (2) the turnover rate among those assigned affirmative action responsibility, (3) the utilization of affirmative action committees, and (4) whether the productivity of the "managers" of affirmative action has resulted in an affirmative action plan on file with HEW. Responses to the questionnaire were received from fifty-five (94.8%) institutions and indicate the following trends:

1. Among the four-year institutions, there was an increase in

---

[1]Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Higher Education Guidelines, 1972.

[2]Esther Kronovet, "Affirmative Action Plan Criteria," Research in Education, December, 1973.

the number of individuals with fulltime affirmative action responsibility as distinct from collateral activity. In 1974, seven (50.0%) of these institutions had appointed fulltime Affirmative Action Officers, where there was only one (7.1%) in 1973. An increase from 0.0% to 33.0% occurred among the agricultural and technical institutions. There was no increase within the community colleges.

2. Those individuals assigned affirmative action responsibility on a collateral basis continue to have fulltime job titles that cover a range of positions within the institution's table of organization:

President
Vice President of the Arts
Dean of the College
Academic Dean
Dean of Administration
Associate Dean of Instruction
Associate Professor
Director of Institutional Research
Associate Dean of Faculty Personnel
Associate Dean of Administration
Director of Employee Relations
Personnel Director
Director of Grants
Assistant to the President

At three (5.5%) institutions a faculty member was assigned the role of Affirmative Action Officer in addition to teaching.

3. There was a 32.7% turnover rate from 1973 to 1974 among individuals assigned affirmative action responsibility.
4. Affirmative action committees have been organized on most (72.7%) campuses. Appointments to this committee are made by President (45.4%), Affirmative Action Officer (3.6%), both President and Affirmative Action Officer (7.3%), Academic Senate (5.5%), President and Academic Senate (5.5%), or through other systems that include divisional or departmental elections (7.3%).
5. At most (60.0%) institutions affirmative action plans are "in preparation," while 30.0% have plans "on file" with HEW and/or the central office charged with equal employment opportunity for the City University of New York or State University of New York. Very few (3.6%) have not started working on an affirmative action plan.

These results suggest that one of the reasons enforcement agencies are so backlogged is that there has been minimal action within colleges and universities to implement the requirements of Executive Orders, thereby leading to an increase in class and individual complaints. Recent reports demonstrate that within institutions academic departments are not only male dominated, but some continue to be totally male in the composition of its faculty.[3]

---

[3]The New York Times, "Berkeley Plan Could End Hiring Bias in 30 Years," March 5, 1975, p. 36.

There is little doubt that the most essential ingredient in bringing about any change is that of commitment. Despite legislation and Executive Orders, the fact remains that although we can prohibit discriminatory practices, the same does not hold for attitudes and feelings of prejudice toward any group or groups of individuals. If attitude modification is to take place, strategies for change must be channeled toward both attitudinal and action levels. This constitutes quite a challenge for the Affirmative Action Officer as a change agent. However, the position within the institution's table of organization from which he or she functions becomes a determining factor in the degree of influence that can be exercised. Again, this assumes commitment and there is no way of assessing the degree of importance attached to this in the selection of the institution's Affirmative Action Officer. Nor does it appear that the professional qualifications needed for preparing, analyzing, and implementing an affirmative action plan have been sufficiently studied and defined; otherwise, it is unlikely that there would be such a range of unrelated job titles among those responsible for affirmative action.

The turnover rate among these "managers" during the course of one year is worthy of note. Although it is difficult to arrive at conclusions, some interesting possibilities lend themselves to speculation. One interpretation is that not all individuals appointed were equipped through educational background, training, and experience to be sufficiently productive in this role. A second possibility is that the institution's internal struggles over governance are so intense that there is less receptivity among faculty for accepting the decision-making role of the Affirmative Action Officer, thereby rendering this position ineffective.

A third possibility is that the individual was "drafted" to carry out this function and is all too eager to relinquish the role as soon as material has been filed with HEW. (It should be noted here that this writer has received from other colleges copies of affirmative action plans that are a brief statement of intent rather than a comprehensive analysis of employment practices and goals.)

Finally, it is important to consider the nature of the position itself and the pressures to which the "manager" is subjected. On the one hand, the Federal government has established a set of demands upon the institution. To respond to these stirs up the vested interests of different racial, religious and ethnic groups, as well as the anxiety level of white males who see affirmative action as constituting a restraining force in future employment and the rate at which they can progress up the institution's ladder.

Superimposed upon the confusion generated within colleges and universities due to lack of experience with affirmative action is the fact that HEW has not generated the kinds of firm requirements and timetables that facilitate the preparation and submission of an affirmative action plan. This government agency has also been delinquent in its failure to establish clear cut criteria for what constitutes an acceptable plan according to HEW standards. A sample format in its Higher Education Guidelines would certainly go a long way in facilitating the efficient preparation of affirmative action plans.

Another problem relates to HEW's expectation that institutions maintain records on job applicants based on race and ethnicity. To require this information of applicants can also be interpreted as a violation of civil rights. However, if a request for this information is optional and

many applicants choose not to comply, these data become meaningless.

The tendency of HEW to request data that is not available further frustrates individuals and slows down the preparation of an affirmative action plan. For example, information on the number of minorities and women represented in different fields of specialization was not available when the HEW Higher Education Guidelines first appeared in print. In fact, trying to track down this information sometimes required contacting a variety of separate organizations. Not infrequently such explorations lead to a dead end because funds had run dry for their grants to study this question, so that data was not available. Although HEW has now published some of this information, there continues t. be many statistical gaps.

Lastly, HEW could help the Affirmative Action Officer and others concerned with equal opportunity by defining terms that appear throughout the Guidelines which seem to have special meaning for those in government office. For example, it is indicated that institutions that received $50,000 or more in Federal contracts and have 50 or more employees shall file a written affirmative action plan. However, HEW fails to define and differentiate between contracts and grants. Only within the last few months has a statement about this matter been prepared by the equal opportunity office for State University of New York.

One final problem comes to mind and this has to do with affirmative action outreach programs for religious and ethnic minorities. Although there is a statement in the Federal Register[4] that clearly indicates that affirmative action programs embrace religious and ethnic minor-

---

[4]Federal Register, Vol. 38, No. 13, January 19, 1973.

ities, HEW has failed to take a position with regard to the inclusion of these groups into affirmative action plans. It is clear that unless a position is articulated by HEW, this will continue to be a source of confusion among those concerned with equal opportunity, and will only serve to ignore an issue that prevails within many ivory towers: namely, religious discrimination.

This overview of unresolved issues suggests a need to reshape the HEW requirements in relation to colleges and universities[5] and to provide models for the design, preparation and implementation of plans. The availability of such material could indeed go a long way in assisting the managers of affirmative action programs to respond to the requirements of the Executive Orders. This procedure would also reduce the need for workshops for college administrators which focus on how to prepare affirmative action plans, an approach that is costly and diverts too much attention away from compliance reviews by HEW staff.

Today, with the low turnover rate among faculty, increasing numbers of Ph.D.'s, and shrinking budgets, affirmative action goals will be achieved at a snail's pace. This also means, however, that with every new job line it is incumbent upon the Affirmative Action Officer to make each opening really count in terms of opportunity for minorities and women. Ultimately, good faith efforts must be supported by statistics if colleges and universities are to meet their responsibilities to society.

---

[5]Fields, Cheryl M. "Rights Crackdown on Colleges Urged," The Chronicle of Higher Education, Vol. IX, No. 17, January 27, 1975, p. 1.